



English Parents' Committee Association



IN THIS ISSUE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

New Year - Time to start thinking about transitions

ARTICLES

CEGEP

- How to Prepare your Child - General
- How to Prepare your Child - Parents of Children with Special Needs

Preparing for Life Beyond School :
Understanding the TEVA Program

ARTICLES

How Screen Time Impacts Kids' Mental Health—and How Parents Can Help

8 Tips to Help Your Child Cope with Test Anxiety

Alloprof: New Year, Fresh Start: Supporting Your Child with Goal-Setting, Without Adding Stress

- VIRTUAL SESSION

PARENT RESOURCES



Katherine Korakakis is the President of the English Parents Committee Association (EPCA) and Head of Entrepreneurship at ProMontreal Entrepreneurs (PME), an early-stage VC fund. She has spent over a decade fostering entrepreneurial initiatives in Quebec, particularly through the Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge. Katherine also serves as Vice-President of PME MTL Centre-Ouest, participates on key investment committees, and has co-authored guidebooks on entrepreneurship education, contributing her expertise to various corporate boards.

President's message

New Year - Time to start thinking about transitions

Dear parents,

Happy New Year to you and your family. As we step into 2026, I wish you health, steadiness, and moments of joy, especially as we navigate a school year that continues to ask a lot of our children, our educators, and parents.

Prepare now for the school-to-CEGEP transition

Whether your child is moving into secondary school or preparing for CEGEP, the best time to start is now. If your child has an IEP or specific supports, note what is working today so those supports are clearly carried forward. A few simple ways to begin:

- Talk about routines and independence: managing deadlines, organizing materials, the reality of increased autonomy at CEGEP, communicating with teachers, and asking for help early.
- Check in on learning habits: not just grades, but sleep, stress, motivation, and time management.
- If your child has an IEP, a plan, or specific needs: document what works now and what supports must continue so you are ready for the next setting.
- Explore pathways: programs, prerequisites, open houses, and admission timelines.

EPCA has provided additional information on the transition to CEGEP in this newsletter. We will also continue sharing tools and reliable information to help families feel prepared, not overwhelmed, by these transitions.

Bill 1: EPCA will be presenting a brief

EPCA will be presenting a brief on Bill 1 at the National Assembly on February 4 at 4:00 p.m. We want to ensure parents' perspectives, and the implications for the English-speaking community, are clearly on the record.

New province-wide civility rules in schools

Quebec has introduced new civility rules requiring students to address staff formally and use formal language. My first reaction was mixed; I understand the intent of setting a tone of respect, and parents have said it can be a good starting point. But it is not a miracle solution to violence or serious behavioural crises. Wording changes are not going to help when a student becomes dysregulated.

I support the objective, but this cannot become a substitute for real support in classrooms. Civility is not just words; it depends on conditions: relationships, consistency, and real support in the classroom.

Wishing you a smooth start to the year,

Katherine Korakakis
President, English Parents' Committee Association

How to Prepare your Child – General

Source: [Alloprof](#)

CEGEP marks an important and exciting new chapter in your teen's life. Here are a few tips on helping your child make a smooth transition from high school and navigate the many changes they're about to face.

At the CEGEP level there are 3 courses of study:

- Pre-university. Pre-university Diploma of College Studies (pre-university DCS). A pre-university DCS prepares students for university studies. Pre-university programs include general education courses as well as courses related to the student's chosen area of study. The number of required courses depends on the program. Duration: usually 2 years (3 for double DCSs)
- Technical. Technical Diploma of College Studies (technical DCS). A technical DCS prepares students to enter the job market right away or go on to pursue university studies. This type of program is open to anyone with a high school diploma, DVS, or relevant work experience in the chosen field and who has completed the prerequisites required by the school. Duration: usually 3 years (4 for certain programs)
- Short-term technical. Attestation of College Studies (ACS). An ACS allows graduates to enter the job market immediately after finishing their studies. These programs are primarily intended for adults who have interrupted their studies for at least one year and who hold a high school diploma or a DVS related to their desired program of study. Other prerequisites may be required. Since colleges regularly change their program offerings, check online for the most accurate information. Duration: 3 to 24 months

Help Your Teen Choose a Program of study

Your child got a taste of choosing their courses in Secondary IV and V (math, sciences, etc.). Now they have to decide what CEGEP program to take based on their career goals. There are a number of things you can do to help them make an informed decision:

- Talk to them about their options
- Discuss why they're leaning towards one program over another
- Discuss why they're leaning towards one school over another
- Identify their strengths and weaknesses
- Encourage them to make an appointment with a guidance counsellor
- Visit CEGEP websites to learn more about their programs
- Go to open houses



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CEGEP

How to Prepare your Child – General

cont.

Discuss the Differences Between High School and CEGEP

Going from high school to CEGEP is a pretty big jump. Students have more autonomy, but also more responsibility. You can help prepare your child by talking over what they can expect. Your teen should know that the CEGEP school year is shorter (two 15-week semesters), that full-time studies typically means 15 hours of class per week, that classes are usually 2 to 3 hours long (including a break), that students have to manage any learning difficulties more independently and that their grades will affect their chances of getting into more competitive university programs. Remember that individualized education plans apply only to students who've received an official diagnosis

Promote the Merits of Being Well Organized

There's no secret recipe for academic success, but organization is a great place to start. In theory, your child has been developing and experimenting with various organization strategies since elementary school. With CEGEP on the horizon, you can encourage them to keep up good habits such as using an agenda, setting priorities, dividing work into smaller tasks and making time to have fun.

Ensure a Healthy Work-Study Balance

Many CEGEP students work or take on internships. Consequently, it's essential that they learn to maintain a good work-study balance. To ensure your teen stays on the right track, you can help them determine the ideal number of hours they should devote to work, set their own limits, choose an empathetic employer and identify signs of burnout.

Watch for Signs of Anxiety

Anxiety looks different for everybody. It has a wide range of symptoms, including migraines, insomnia, and digestive problems. It can also come through in more insidious ways through absenteeism, lack of motivation or just exhaustion. To help your child better manage their anxiety they can go for walks or get other forms of exercise. They can listen to music, draw, or do other relaxation exercises. If, despite your best efforts, your teen is still struggling with anxiety, you can encourage them to seek professional help through the mental health services at their school.



CEGEP

How to Prepare your Child – Parents of Children with Special Needs

Navigating the transition from high school to CEGEP can feel overwhelming, and more so for parents of students with special needs. Here are some practical tips to help with a successful transition:

1. Start Early with Planning

Research programs and investigate the CEGEPs in your area to identify programs that match your child's strengths, interests, and career goals. Many CEGEPs, such as Dawson College and Vanier College, offer inclusive education services.

- Link: [Student Accessibility, Dawson College](#)
- Link: [Access Center, Vanier College](#)

Take advantage of CEGEP open houses and visit them. Tour the facilities and ask and learn about available support services for students with special needs. Meet with the guidance counselors if possible. Collaborate with your child's high school guidance counselor to create a clear post-secondary transition plan.

2. Understand Accommodations

Prepare the necessary documents. Make sure your child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or psychoeducational assessment is up to date. This documentation is required to access academic accommodations in CEGEP. Make arrangements to speak to Disability Services. Contact the CEGEP's Student Access Centre to learn about their available support services, such as note-takers, tutoring, and extended time for exams.



3. Build Independence Skills

Continue teaching your child time management and organization skills. Help them develop the skills to manage their time and stay organized. Self-Advocacy is a very important skill for students with special needs. Encourage your child to practice expressing their needs to teachers and peers. Role-playing conversations can help build their confidence in this regard.

CEGEP

How to Prepare your Child – Parents of Children with Special Needs

cont.

4. Plan for Transportation and Accessibility

Look at transportation options. Research and arrange transportation, whether it's public transit, adapted transport services, or carpools. Becoming familiar with the campus will be very helpful to your child. Visit the campus with your child so they can familiarize themselves with its layout and accessibility features.

5. Set Realistic Expectations

Be prepared for an adjustment period. The transition to CEGEP is a significant step, and it's okay for your child to take time to adapt. Be patient and supportive while they find their footing. Celebrate all successes and achievements along the way and focus on building their confidence and motivation.

6. Stay Involved and Supportive

While encouraging independence, remain a supportive presence. Check in regularly and stay up to date with any challenges they might have.

Important: French Language Requirements at English CEGEPs in Montreal

In Quebec, students attending English-language CEGEPs must meet provincial French-language graduation requirements under the Charter of the French Language (Bill 96), even if they completed their prior schooling in English. While English CEGEPs provide academic accommodations through Student Accessibility Services, these supports do not eliminate French course requirements. Families are encouraged to address French requirements early, ensure assessments are up to date, and work with guidance counsellors to plan educational pathways.

With careful preparation and by utilizing the resources available, our children can flourish in this next chapter of their journey. Remember, you are not alone, connect with educators, support centers, and other parents to share insights and guidance. Together, we can empower our children to succeed.



Preparing for Life Beyond School : Understanding the TEVA Program

The transition from school to adulthood is a major milestone—one that can feel especially challenging for students who need additional support. Quebec's Transition de l'école vers la vie active (TEVA) program is designed to help students and families navigate this change with clearer planning and coordinated support.

TEVA focuses on preparing students for life after school in ways that reflect their strengths, needs, and goals, whether that includes employment, further education, or community involvement.

What is TEVA?

Also known as Transition from School to Active Life (TSAL), TEVA is a Ministry of Education initiative that helps students plan their transition out of the school system and into adult life.

Who is it for?

The program is intended for students with a significant and persistent disability, or with severe social maladjustment or learning difficulties, who may benefit from additional planning and support.

Why is it important?

TEVA brings together school, health, social services, and community partners to offer coordinated and accessible supports aligned with the student's life plan and aspirations.

When does it begin?

While timing depends on each student's situation, it is generally recommended to start the TEVA process at least three years before the student is expected to leave secondary school.

Who is involved?

The school administration leads the process, working closely with the student, their family, and external partners. A navigator supports the student throughout the transition and helps ensure continuity of services after leaving school.

How does it work?

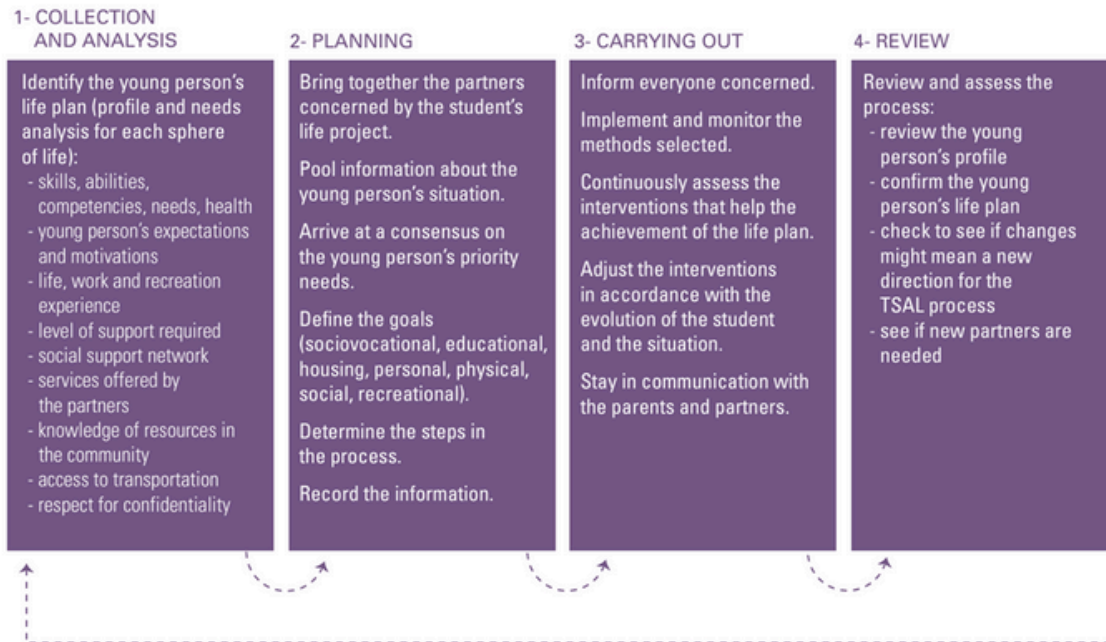
The school team, student, and family work together to identify goals and strategies across all areas of the student's life, in collaboration with relevant services and organizations.

Figure 1: The transition process involves the young person's various spheres of life.



Preparing for Life Beyond School : Understanding the TEVA Program cont.

Figure II: The steps in the TSAL process



Source: Guide for Supporting the Transition from School to Active Life (TSAL).

How Can Parents Get Involved?

Parents play an essential role in the TEVA process. Starting conversations early with the school team can help ensure a smooth and well-supported transition.

Parents can:

- Participate in transition planning meetings
- Communicate regularly with teachers and professionals
- Encourage their child to explore interests and build independence

Staying informed and involved can make a meaningful difference.

How to Access the TEVA Program

If you think your child could benefit from TEVA, begin by contacting your school administration. They can guide you through the next steps and share additional resources, including information available on the official TEVA website.



How Screen Time Impacts Kids' Mental Health—and How Parents Can Help

- Audrey Elkeslassy (BT Counselling)

Too much screen time can affect kids' mood, sleep, and focus. Learn how your own habits shape theirs, and how to support healthy balance.

Screens are everywhere in kids' lives—phones, tablets, games, and streaming. While technology can be positive, too much screen time and its negative impact, is a concern I hear from many families. Parents often notice changes in their child's mood, sleep, or ability to focus, and wonder if screens are part of the problem.

How Screen Time Can Affect Mental Health

In my work with families, I've seen some common patterns:

- Kids who spend long hours on screens often have more trouble falling asleep, especially if they use devices close to bedtime.
- Some children become more irritable, anxious, or withdrawn after heavy screen use.
- It's common for schoolwork and chores to slip when screens take priority.
- Many parents notice their kids are less interested in outdoor play or face-to-face time with friends and family.
- Even though kids are “connected” online, they can still feel lonely or left out.

It's important to remember these effects aren't limited to children. Many adults also notice more stress, impatience, trouble sleeping, or difficulty focusing when their own screen time creeps up. If you find yourself feeling more distracted, tired, or disconnected after long stretches online, you're not alone. Kids often learn their habits by watching the adults around them, so making changes as a family can benefit everyone.

Experts don't fully agree on a perfect number of hours for screen time. What matters most is balance and noticing when screens start to crowd out other important parts of life—like sleep, movement, and real-world connection.

What Parents Can Do to Support Healthy Habits

1. Set clear, consistent boundaries.

Families I work with often find it helpful to create screen-free times, such as during meals or before bed. Having predictable routines makes it easier for everyone to know what to expect.



How Screen Time Impacts Kids' Mental Health—and How Parents Can Help

cont.

2. Stay curious and involved.

Ask your child about the games or shows they enjoy. This opens up conversation and helps you understand what draws them in—and if anything is worrying them.

3. Encourage a mix of activities.

Kids are more likely to take breaks from screens if there are other options available, like crafts, sports, or family games. Some families plan regular outdoor time or shared activities to help balance things out.

4. Reflect on your own screen habits.

Here's a question to consider: What do your kids see when they look at you during family time? Children learn by watching the adults around them. If they see parents regularly putting away devices to be present, it sends a strong message about the value of real-world connection.

5. Be patient with change.

It's normal for kids to push back when limits are set. Consistency and calm responses help over time. Some days will be easier than others, and that's okay.

If you're concerned about your child's mood, sleep, or social life, reaching out for support can make a difference. Many families find that small changes add up over time.

If this feels heavy, support is available; you do not have to figure it out alone.

At BreakThrough Counselling, we help families navigate challenges and support their child's well-being with care, clarity and practical support. You can learn more at: btcounselling.com or info@btcounselling.com.



8 Tips to Help Your Child Cope with Test Anxiety

As children progress through school, they face increasingly challenging tests in a range of subjects. For kids who've struggled with tests before, the fear of failure can become overwhelming. These tips will help you support your child in reducing test anxiety and building confidence.

1. Start by Understanding Their Worries

Talk openly with your child about what's making them anxious. Is it the subject matter, the test format, or fear of time constraints? Once you know the root cause, you can work together on specific strategies to address it. Reassure your child that their feelings are normal and try to remain calm while discussing the situation. Your calm demeanour can help them feel more at ease.

2. Practice Makes Perfect (and Less Stressful)

Encourage your child to practice with mock tests, if available. If not, go over past quizzes and assignments to review the test format and content. Familiarity with the process can reduce the fear of the unknown.

You can also help your child practice pacing by timing how long it takes them to complete a test. This can teach them to manage their time effectively during the real exam.

3. Plan Ahead to Avoid Last-Minute Stress

Scrambling to prepare for a test the night before can create unnecessary anxiety. Work with your child to stay on top of test dates by keeping a shared calendar. Regularly reviewing this calendar together can help your child feel more organized and in control.

4. Prepare Gradually and Consistently

Cramming for a test the night before is likely to heighten stress levels. Instead, integrate test preparation into your child's regular study routine. As the test date approaches, gradually increase the amount of time dedicated to review. Help your child prioritize tests that carry more weight toward their overall grade and focus their efforts on those subjects.



8 Tips to Help Your Child Cope with Test Anxiety

cont.

5. Boost Confidence in Study Materials

Children who struggle with note-taking may worry that their notes aren't accurate. If this is a concern, encourage them to seek out additional resources. Teachers might be willing to review their notes or provide a summary of key points. Another option is pairing them with a study buddy to cross-check notes and share ideas. Feeling prepared can go a long way in reducing anxiety.



6. Ensure Test Accommodations Are in Place

If your child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or requires testing accommodations, confirm these details with their teacher ahead of time. Knowing accommodations—such as extra time, a quiet room, or a reader—are in place can make your child feel supported and less stressed.

7. Recognize Their Efforts and Emotions

Acknowledge the hard work your child is putting into studying, even if they feel nervous. Validate their feelings by saying things like, “I can see how hard you’re working. That’s going to help you feel more prepared.” Praise their efforts, not just their results, to emphasize the value of preparation and perseverance.

8. Teach Them That Setbacks Are Learning Opportunities

Sometimes, even with preparation, kids don't perform as well as they'd hoped. Use these moments to focus on improvement rather than failure. Discuss what went well and what could be done differently next time. Help your child develop an action plan. For example, “You worked so hard for that test. Let’s talk to your teacher about some additional strategies or resources that could help you for the next one.”

By encouraging open communication, preparation, and a focus on progress rather than perfection, you can help your child develop the tools they need to face tests with confidence and calm. With practice and support, test anxiety doesn't have to hold them back.

The logo for Alloprof, featuring the word "alloprof" in a stylized, lowercase font.

Alloprof: New Year, Fresh Start: Supporting Your Child with Goal- Setting, Without Adding Stress

Mission: Alloprof helps students in Quebec to transform academic challenges into successes, thanks to its free, professional, and stimulating services.



After the holidays, January can feel like a fresh start. For many children, though, returning to school also brings pressure: homework, upcoming projects, exams, and the feeling that they need to “do better.” If your child feels worried or overwhelmed, you may find the article [Helping Your Child Deal with School and Homework Anxiety](#) useful.

Starting a new year doesn't have to mean making big resolutions or striving for perfection. Often, the most meaningful progress comes from small, realistic steps — and from feeling encouraged and supported at home. Visual tools can also help. Printable supports like our homework routine posters ([elementary](#) and [high school](#)) give children structure without adding pressure.

(And if you'd like extra support, we're also hosting a [free parent session in collaboration with EPCA later this month](#)—details below.)

Start with reflection, not pressure

Before setting goals with your child, take time to talk about the fall term:

- What felt good?
- What was challenging?
- What would they like to do differently?

These conversations help your child see learning as a journey, not a test. Sometimes simply recognizing your child's efforts is enough to rebuild their confidence. These conversations also help you better understand what works, and for [setting goals that feel realistic and achievable](#). Once your child is ready to put their goals into action, our printable [Goal Planner for teens](#) is a helpful tool to guide them.



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Supporting Your Child with Goal-Setting

cont.

Focus on small, achievable goals

When goals feel too big, kids can quickly become discouraged. Instead, help your child focus on habits that are simple and doable:

- ✓ keeping track of homework in their agenda
- ✓ reading for a few minutes each evening
- ✓ asking for help earlier in the process
- ✓ preparing their school bag the night before

For ideas for building good habits rather than achieving perfection, read [What Makes a Good Student?](#)

If your child is still developing organization skills at the elementary level, our printable tools can help. The [homework checklist](#), [mood thermometer](#), and [homework challenge goal-setting chart](#) support routines and help children recognize feelings before frustration takes over.

Students can also explore Alloprof tools at their own pace, no matter their grade level:

- [Concept sheets](#)
- [Videos](#)
- [Games](#) and [exercises](#)
- [Ask a Teacher](#)

You're not alone, join us!

A fresh start is possible any day of the year. With patience, realistic goals, and strong partnerships between home and school, every child can make progress, one step at a time. And don't forget, if you'd like ideas and resources delivered right to your inbox, you can also sign up for the [Alloprof Parents newsletter](#).



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**English Parents'
Committee Association**

EPCA & AlloProf VIRTUAL SESSION

In collaboration with EPCA

To start the year with confidence and practical tools, join our free virtual session:
Parents + Alloprof: Uniting to Support Your Child's Learning Journey - In collaboration with EPCA

 Wednesday, January 21 at 7:00 p.m.

 Free online session

We'll explore how you and your child can make the most of Alloprof's resources at home.

Parents + Alloprof

**Uniting to Support
Your Child's
Learning Journey**

A free virtual information session for parents and guardians.



In Collaboration with **English Parents' Committee Association**

Wednesday, January 21st at 7:00 pm

Parent Resources



The Quebec Federation of Parents' Committees, with support from various partners – including EPCA's President Katherine Korakakis, has put together a guide to assist parents whose children are facing violence or bullying issues at school – click [here](#).

Tutoring



Homework Help



ENGLISH ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATES

Explainer: What Quebec parents and students need to know about English eligibility certificates: At this [LINK](#) are details on how to apply for a certificate and who is eligible to attend English schools in Quebec.

EPCA MISSION STATEMENT

The English Parents' Committee Association (EPCA) is a coalition of parents' committees of Quebec's English-language public school boards, representing more than 100,00 students in the youth sector.

EPCA advocates for a strong and sustainable English-language public education system to ensure the best possible educational outcomes for our children, while respecting the culture and language of anglophone Quebecers.

To do so, EPCA seeks to engage and motivate parents across Quebec to contribute to strong, representative and effective parent governance, to foster positive relationships with stakeholders across the educational spectrum, and to provide guidance and support to all member organizations.

What would you like to see in
our upcoming editions?

[TELL US HERE](#)

5253, Blvd. Decarie, Suite 309, Montreal, Quebec, H3W 3C3
(514) 778-3722 - epcaquebec.org - president@epcaquebec.org

EPCA STRATEGIC PILLARS

INFORM

Using all communications tools at our disposal, offer up-to-date information on public education initiatives, parent governance interests, best practices and issues management to ensure a healthy, well-engaged anglophone parent community.

CONSULT

Ensure strong, high-quality and consistent feedback mechanisms with members and partners across the English-language public school network through both electronic and in-person methods.

SUPPORT

Provide training and professional development at all levels of parent governance, optimize the sharing of best practices and provide multiple support services for parent committees, governing boards and parent delegates in need.

ADVOCATE

Push for appropriate policy change and improvement through enhanced partnerships with like-minded organizations, Government working groups/tasks forces, and related organizations, through well-considered political positions on behalf of English- Language parents committees across Quebec, taking into account regional difference and the urban/rural divide.